God's Call of His Ministers,

IN A

SERMON

PREACH'D IN THE

PARISH-CHURCH

OF

St. Mary White-Chappel,

ON

Sunday the 16*th* of *September*, 1711.

By WILLIAM RICHARDSON, lately a Diſſenting-Preacher in *Pin-maker's-Hall*, and St. *John's*, *Clerkenwel*, *London*, but now Canonically Ordain'd a Presbyter of the Church of *England*.

When thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy Brethren,
St. Luke xxii. 32.

LONDON:
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[illegible]

BRITISH MUSEUM

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LONDON:

[illegible]

The DEDICATION.

To the Right Reverend FATHER in GOD,

HENRY

Lord Bishop of *London*.

MY LORD,

AS I am instructed by the Ancient Fathers, *to give the Title of Chief, or High-Priest, to the Bishop, qui est Summus sacerdos, so my own Experience obliges me to acknowledge that* Your Lordship *has been to me, as well as many others, a* Gracious High-Priest, *who shews great* Compassion toward the Ignorant, and on them that are out of the Way. Your Lordship, *as a good* Shepherd, *both by Your self, and Excellent Clergy, who are subject to You, shews a suitable Zeal for bringing back the Sheep which have gone astray, and You receive them, with open Arms, into the Church.*

IT has been my great Unhappiness, to have been so long engag'd in a Woful Schism, *and to have taken upon me to Officiate as a Minister, which, I am now convinc'd, I had no right Call to do.*

The DEDICATION.

I have published my Retractation *in the following* Discourse, *which contains the* Chief Reasons *of my coming out from among them, and my begging Admission into the* CHURCH.

THIS Discourse *is my* Sermon *preach'd at* White-Chappel, *Corrected and Enlarg'd, with Design that my Acknowledgments might be more full, and the* Discourse *more useful, if it shall please GOD to give His Blessing towards the Conversion of my late Brethren, several of whom, indeed, have a* Zeal for GOD, but not according to knowledge.

I lay hold of this Opportunity, to give this Testimony of my Gratitude to Your Lordship, *and to own, that I am,*

With great Veneration,

May it please Your LORDSHIP,

Your LORDSHIP's

Most Obedient Servant,

WILLIAM RICHARDSON.

HEBR. V. *Ver.* 4, 5.

And no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

So also Christ *glorified not himself, to be made an High-Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.*

N the foregoing Verses, the Apostle St. *Paul* sets forth the Personal Qualifications, and the Duties of the Sacred Function of the High-Priest, and in the Words of my Text, his Call to that most Honourable Office.

The former made him meet for it, the latter vested him with a Title and Right to it.

The Consequence is, that for One to be separated from the Body of the People, *to stand before the Lord, to minister unto him, and to bless in his Name*; to be entrusted with the *Ministry of Reconciliation* betwixt God and Man, and *Christ's Ambassador* to Men, he must be duly called, a right Method and Order must be observ'd: The Heavenly

Jeruſalem, the Mother of us all, is, by the Almighty God, the Lord and Father of that Family, preſerv'd in the greateſt Order, and beſt Government, and can we imagine that he has taken no care of his Family upon Earth, his Church Militant, when all wiſe Men are agreed that Order and Government are indiſpenſibly and eſſentially neceſſary to the Preſervation, Peace and Welfare of every Society; in which there muſt be a due Subordination, which is inconſiſtent with Parity; for, where there are none to command, none will obey; and where every one is ſet looſe from the Yoke of Government, to do what is *right in his own Eyes*, what pleaſes him beſt; Confuſion, and every evil Work will be the unavoidable Conſequences. To prevent which dreadful Evils, our Bleſſed Saviour hath inſtituted ſeveral Orders of Officers in his Church, to be continued to the End of the World, and promis'd to be *with them alway, even unto the end*, and the Conſummation of all Things. For when *he aſcended up on high, he gave gifts unto men, ſome Apoſtles, ſome Prophets, ſome Evangliſts, ſome Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt, till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the meaſure of the Stature of the Fullneſs of Chriſt*, Epheſ. iv. 8. xi. 12, 13.

St. *John the Baptiſt* tells us, *A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven*, Joh. iii. 27. Let me ask theſe few Queſtions, Can any Man ſtand before the Lord to miniſter to him, unleſs choſen by him? Can he diſpenſe the *Miniſtry of Reconciliation*, unleſs it be committed to his Truſt by God? Can he execute the Office of an Ambaſſador of Chriſt, unleſs appointed by his Principal? Can he remit or retain Sins, without being authorized by him, to whom all Power in Heaven and Earth is given? who ſaid, *As my Father ſent me, ſo ſend I you?* Can any Man bleſs, in the Name of God, with effect, but he whom God has empower'd, to bleſs in his Name? Can any Perſon ratifie and ſeal God's Covenant with Men, but he who has receiv'd full Powers from Heaven for that End? Or, Can they Preach, except they be ſent? Or, in the Words of my Text, Can any Man *take this honour to himſelf*, &c. 'Twould be Blaſphemy to anſwer any one of theſe Queſtions in the Affirmative, and contrary to the expreſs Texts of Scripture.

Until it pleas'd God to make the Children of *Iſrael* his peculiar People, the Prieſthood appears to have been appropriated to the Firſt-born, and the *major Domo*, or Father of the Family executed the Prieſtly-Office; and for that Reaſon *Eſau* is ſtigmatiz'd by the Apoſtle, *Heb.* xii. 16. as a prophane Perſon, for *ſelling his Birth-right*. But when the Almighty brought *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, and *Judah* was

become his Sanctuary, and *Iſrael* his Dominion, He ſeparated the Tribe of *Levi* from the Congregation of *Iſrael*, to bring them near to himſelf, to do the Service of the Tabernacle of the Lord, *&c. Numb.* iii. 45. xvi. 9. But he conferr'd the Prieſthood upon *Aaron* and his Sons, and appointed *Moſes* to conſecrate him with great Solemnity before the whole Congregation, as you have it at length, *Exod.* xxviii. and *Levit.* viii. Accordingly *Moſes* conſecrated *Aaron*, *Agitatus a Deo conſecrationis principe*, ſays *Dionyſius*, that is, *ſtirred up by God the Principal or Author of the Conſecration.*

Moſes perform'd the external Rites of Conſecration, but God was the Conſecrator. *Moſes* appointed *Aaron* to the Prieſthood, but it was only as the Miniſter and Deputy under God, the chief Conſecrator. *Aaron* deriv'd his Honour and Office from God, and not from his younger Brother. *No man taketh this honour*, &c.

In diſcourſing on theſe Words, I ſhall obſerve the following Method.

I. I will ſpeak in, a few Words, to the Honourableneſs of the Miniſterial-Office.

II. Shew that Epiſcopal-Ordination only can confer that Sacred Office.

III. That

III. That valid Orders cannot be conferr'd by any of the *Diſſenters* of whatever Denomination.

IV. The neceſſity of an outward Call.

Firſt, I ſhall not ſpend time to prove that before the Inſtitution of the Aaronical Prieſthood, that Office was never ſeparated from the Primogeniture; the firſt Born, the Excellency of Dignity, the Chief of the Family, was always Prieſt; and as God claim'd a right of having him devoted to himſelf, ſo his Sacerdotal Office was the greateſt Honour he poſſeſs'd. 'Twas that which made *Melchiſedeck*, the Prieſt of the moſt High God, greater than the Patriarch *Abraham*, the Heir of the World, that had the Promiſes, For *Melchiſedeck* Bleſſed him, and as the Apoſtle adds, without all Contradiction, the leſs is Bleſſed of the greater, *Heb.* vii. 6, 7 Neither ſhall I enlarge on the Eſteem, and Honour the Prieſtly Office was had in amongſt the Heathens, who had nothing but the light of Nature to guide them, how their greateſt Kings and Emperours join'd the Sacerdotal to their Regal and Imperial Dignity.

'Tis obvious to all who are acquainted with the holy Scriptures, that even under the Law, the Dignity, Authority and Power of the Prieſts were great, as were the Bleſſings by their Miniſtrations to the People. How Glorious were the Apparel and appearance

pearance of the High Prieſt? And yet, when the Apoſtle makes the Compariſon, how far does the Evangelical Miniſtry tranſcend the Legal? 2 *Cor.* iii. 7. *&c.* If the Miniſtration of Death Written and Ingraven in Stones was Glorious; ſo that the Children of *Iſrael* could not ſtedfaſtly behold the Face of *Moſes*, for the Glory of his Countenance, which Glory was to be done away; how ſhall not the Miniſtration of the Spirit be rather Glorious? For if the Miniſtration of Condemnation be Glory, how much more doth the Miniſtration of Righteouſneſs exceed in Glory, and in the next Verſe, it is called the Glory that exceedeth.

The Epithets given by the Spirit of God, throughout the New Teſtament, to the Miniſters of it, are ſo Great and Honourable, as to raiſe their Dignity, and command Veneration. They are Stiled the Shepherd, Governours and Rulers of the People, Miniſters of Chriſt, Prieſts of God, the Salt of the Earth, Burning and ſhining Lights, Lights ſet upon a Candleſtick, Stars, Angels, Ambaſſadors of Chriſt, Diſpenſers of the Myſteries of God, Apoſtles of the Churches, the Glory of Chriſt, Treaſurers of God, to diſpenſe the Riches of the Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt. And if ſuch an Office be Honourable among Men, it is ſtrange, if it be not ſo in the Church, in them who make it their buſineſs to enrich the World with the unſearchable and inexhauſtible Riches of Chriſt; For it's they who ſhew

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the Mine of incomparable Treaſure, they dig it up, and offer it as ſpiritual Merchants to the People, God enriches the whole World by them. This Treaſure is not committed to the Angels, it is put in Earthen Veſſels, that the Excellency of the Power may be of God, and not of us, 2 *Cor.* iv. 7. I ſay, it's diſpens'd by the Miniſters of Chriſt, whom we Preach ſays St. *Paul*, warning every Man, and teaching every Man in all Wiſdom, that we may preſent every Man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus, *Col.* i. 28. But that which raiſes the Prieſthood to the higheſt Pitch of Honour, is, that the Son of God, whom all the Angels of God do Worſhip, became a High Prieſt, and perform'd all the Parts of that Office for the loſt race of Mankind, in Praying, Offering himſelf a Sacrifice for us, Bleſſing us, and Interceeding at the Right Hand of God for us, and yet He glorify'd not himſelf to be an High Prieſt, but he that ſaid unto him, *Thou art my Son*, &c. Thou art a High Prieſt for ever, after the Order of *Melchiſedeck*.

The Reaſons of this great Honour due to the Clergy under all diſpenſations, are chiefly theſe two, tho' it were eaſie to prove many, 1*ſt*, The near Relation they have to God, as being in his ſtead to his People, and as being in their ſtead towards God, ſeemeth it a ſmall thing to you, ye Sons of *Levi*? ſaith *Moſes*, *That God hath choſen you to be near to himſelf*, &c. The ſecond Reaſon is given by our Apoſtle, 1 *Theſſ.* xii. ver. 13. and *Heb.* xiii. 17.

And we beſeech you brethren, to know them which Labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you: and to eſteem them very highly in Love, for their Work's ſake. Obey them that have the rule over you; and ſubmit your ſelves, for they watch for your Souls, as they that muſt give account: that they may do it with Joy, and not with Grief, for that is unprofitable for you. I pray God, that what is ſaid on this Head from His Word, may prevail with my Hearers to pay thoſe Dutiful regards they owe to all thoſe that are over them in the Lord, that will turn to the beſt account to them.

And as for the Clergy, Is their Poſt ſo exceeding Honourable, then let them be diligent in performing all the Offices of their ſacred Function, let them both by their Life and Doctrine, ſet forth the glory of God, and ſet forward the Salvation of all Men, ſeeing we have this Miniſtry; as we have received Grace, let us not faint, but renouncing the hidden things of Diſhoneſty, not walking in Craftineſs, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the Truth, let us commend our ſelves to every Mans Conſcience in the ſight of God, and then if *Iſrael* be gather'd, we ſhall have great cauſe of rejoycing, if not, yet ſhall our reward be with the Lord; for we are unto God a ſweet Savour of Chriſt, in them that are Sav'd, and in them that Periſh, to the one, we are the Savour of Death unto Death, and to the other, the Savour of Life

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unto Life; Who is ſufficient for theſe things?

The ſecond Head, that Epiſcopal Ordination only can confer the ſacred Office of the Miniſtry. Under the Jewiſh Oeconomy, there were three Orders of Miniſters appointed by God, the High Prieſt, the Prieſts and *Levites*, and it has been obſerv'd by diverſe of the Fathers, that the Orders of Biſhops, Presbyters and Deacons ſucceeded them; *Quod Aaron et filii ejus atque Levitæ in Templo fuerunt, hoc Sibi Epiſcopi, Presbyteri atque diaconi vendicent in Eccleſia.* The ſame Ranks which *Aaron*, his Sons and the *Levites* held under the Law, do the Biſhops, Presbyters and Deacons hold in the Chriſtian Church; as St. *Jerome* affirms in his Epiſtle to *Evagrius*, and before him *Clemens Romanus* in his to the *Corinthians*.

I ſhall endeavour to ſhew both from the Scriptures, and earlieſt Fathers, as far as the time will allow me, the ſuperior Authority, Powers and Rights of the Biſhops to all other Church Officers, eſpecially in Ordination and Juriſdiction, and that none have Power to Ordain without, much leſs in Oppoſition to them.

To begin then with the Scriptures, you are to take notice, that Our Bleſſed Saviour, during the Courſe of his Miniſtry on Earth, ſuſtain'd the place of the High Prieſt and Biſhop, and as called by both theſe Names, as appears from *Heb.* iv. 14 and 1 *Pet.* ii. 21. and under him were the Apoſtles, and below them the LXX Diſciples. This anſwers to the

High Priest, Priests and *Levites* under the *Mosaical* Dispensation. After his Ascension, and his sending the Holy Ghost, his gifts were plentifully bestow'd on his Church, as appears from *Ephes* iv. and 1 *Cor.* xii. where it is as clear as the Light, there were Supream and many Subordinate Officers in the Church, and among the last, different degrees. But seeing some of these were Temporary, I will endeavour to make appear that the Apostles constituted and ordain'd Bishops, to ordain Presbyters and Deacons, and to govern them and the Churches committed to their Charge, and in that Character to be succeeded to by others to the end of the World. *Hegesippus* tells us, that the Apostles constituted *James* Bishop of *Jerusalem*, and after him *Simeon Cleopas*, who both were near Kinsmen of our Blessed Saviour. In the first and famous Council of *Jerusalem* recorded, *Acts* xv. in which several of the Apostles were present, it may be taken for granted, that St. *James* presided, from *ver.* xix. wherefore, says he, *my Sentence is*, &c. to which the Apostles and Elders, with the whole Church agreed, *ver.* 28, 29. In this matter, the Ecclesiastical Historians agree, as the Exceptions made against this are trifling, so it would be too tedious to take notice of them here. I shall proceed then to other Instances, which are unexceptionable and full to my purpose, which is to shew that Episcopal Ordination and Jurisdiction have expres Warrant in holy Writ. The first of

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which shall be that in *Tit.* i. 5. *For this cause* saith St. *Paul* to *Titus*, Ordain'd the first Bishop of the Church of the *Cretians*, *Left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting*, or left undone, *and ordain Elders in every City, as I had appointed thee.* The large Island of *Crete*, now called *Candia*, very Populous, having in it no less than a Hundred Cities, for which Cause, it had the Name of *Hecatompolis*, was committed to the care and oversight of *Titus*, who was to Ordain Elders or Presbyters in every City of that Large Diocess. 'Tis no less evident from this Text, that *Titus* had the Power of Ordination, than it is throughout the Epistle that he had the Power of Jurisdiction and Government. He was to set Church Matters in order, he was Judge of the Qualifications of the *Candidates* for the Holy Ministry: He was to stop the Mouths of the Unruly, and vain Talkers and Deceivers, to Rebuke with all Authority, and to reject *Hereticks* after the first and second Admonition. 'Tis *Titus*, I say, that had this Power and Authority, and neither the Clergy nor People under his Care. Let me then ask my late Brethren the *Dissenters*, how they came by such Powers? Who can stop the Mouths of Deceivers, and Purge out the Church of *Hereticks*, but the Bishops? To them, it appears both from what is said, and other Scriptures was committed the Plenitude of Power. Deceivers and *Hereticks* are generally Knowing and Cunning Men, their Leaders at

least; and can easily find the Vanity and groundless Pretensions of Unauthoris'd Preachers to censure them. They will likewise find many of them to be poor illiterate Mechanicks, and, which is worse, unsound in their Doctrine; False Teachers, *Antinomians*, preaching up, in this City, Free-Grace, to the destruction of Good-Works, which we ought carefully to maintain: For, *as the Body without the Spirit is dead, so Faith without Works is dead also*, James ii. 26.

The next Instance I shall bring for Episcopal Ordination and Jurisdiction, shall be in *Timothy*, settled by St. *Paul* at *Ephesus*. St. *Paul*, instructs him fully how to acquit himself in every Part of his Episcopal Office, and to make full Proof of his Ministry, 1 *Tim.* v. 22. *Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other mens sins, keep thy self pure.* The Dissenters themselves allow this Text to be understood of Ordination, which was always solemniz'd with the Ceremony of Imposition of Hands. The Offices to which *Timothy* was to ordain, were those of Presbyters and Deacons; the Qualifications required of such as were to be promoted, are fully set forth by the Apostle, as are the Duties they were obliged faithfully to perform, throughout the whole Course of their Ministry. But in regard, that through the Corruption and Frailty of Men, and the Temptations of the Devil and the World, even some of them who were solemnly set apart for

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Holy Offices, might degenerate, and become unworthy, not only of their Stations, but of being Members of the Church, the Apoſtle gives *Timothy* the Power of Diſcipline, 1 *Tim.* v. 19. *Againſt an Elder receive not an accuſation, but before two or three witneſſes*, and Ver. 20. *Them that ſin rebuke*, &c. The hearing of Eccleſiaſtical Cauſes, the receiving or rejecting of Accuſations brought againſt Presbyters, the examining of Witneſſes, and giving Judgment after a full hearing, are Demonſtrations of the Epiſcopal Juriſdiction, and the Power of Diſcipline in *Timothy*.

By this Time, I think I have ſufficiently made appear from the Holy Scriptures, that the Power of Ordination and Juriſdiction belong to the Biſhops. And ſeeing at the Mouth of Two or Three Witneſſes every Matter is eſtabliſh'd, I take the Truth I aſſert to be as fully prov'd as the Witneſſes I have brought, which are, St. *James*, *Timothy*, and *Titus*, are unexceptionable.

But becauſe my former Brethren and Friends demand Scripture-Proofs for every thing on the Church's Side, I ſhall add One more from the Angels of the *Seven Churches* mentioned in the Firſt Three Chapters of the *Revelation* of St. *John* the *Divine*. I ſee no Reaſon to doubt of their having the ſame Power with thoſe I have already named. 'Tis evident from the Epiſtles written to them, and

Blondel,

* P. 6. Pref. ad Apol. &c. *Blondel* * himself owns, that they were accountable for what Male-Administrations happen'd in their respective Churches. But this could not have been, if *Ordinations* could have been perform'd without them. For the right Administration of the Affairs of a Church depends chiefly on the Care that is taken, that her Officers be worthy Men, fit for their Employments, and, consequently, they must have been Ordain'd by, and subject to those Angels, who stood accountable for their Behaviour.

The Dissenters object, as to the Scripture-Period, which I have hitherto insisted on, the seeming promiscuous use of the Words *Bishop* and *Presbyter*, or *Elder*. Tho' this Objection hardly deserves any Answer, yet I think my self obliged to expose the Weakness of it, because too many have the Misfortune to be imposed on by it. Should the promiscuous use of Words infer all to whom they are apply'd to be of the same Order, then the Apostolical Order would be levelled with the Orders of Presbyters and Deacons, which is absurd, St. *Peter*, 1 Epist. v. 1. calls himself an Elder, and St. *Paul* designs himself and all the Apostles, *Deacons of the New Testament*, 1 Cor. iii 6. Nay, *Rom.* xv. 8. our Blessed Saviour is called a *Deacon*, for Minister and Deacon are the same in the *Greek*; so is Emperor and General in the *Latin* the same, and yet no Man in his right Wits will say, that every General

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of an Army is an Emperor. I grant, that in those Churches where any Apostle resided, commonly they held the Government in their own Hands, and so only Presbyters and Deacons under them. And, in other Places, where the Converts were few, a Bishop and Deacons might do the Work without Presbyters. But *Epiphanius*, against *Aerius*, tells us, *Because the Preaching was new— All Things could not be settled by the Apostles at once, and where none were found to be Priests, they were contented with a Bishop, who could not be without his Deacons for Ministrations, but the Church was not yet compleated in its Offices, since nothing is perfect at first, but, in process of Time, all that it needs was fixed.* But the Instances I have given are of compleat Churches, which had all the Three Orders of *Bishops*, *Priests*, and *Deacons*. I grant, every *Bishop* is a *Presbyter*, but no *Presbyter*, as such, is a *Bishop*, for the superior includes the inferior, but it can never hold on the contrary.

But the chief Objection against the necessity of Episcopal Ordination, is taken from, 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.* This is the only Text that can be brought to countenance Presbyterial Ordination: But this will not answer their Purpose; for supposing the πρεσβυτεριον was a Senate, how can it be made appear to be a Senate of ordinary Presbyters? St.

Chrysostom,

Chryſoſtom, and divers of the Fathers, are poſitive that it was not, and their Reaſon is, that *Timothy* was a Biſhop, and it was never heard that Presbyters could ordain a Biſhop. The Presbyterians, to avoid *Timothy*'s being a Biſhop, ſay, he was an Evangeliſt, that is, an extraordinary Officer. But then how could ordinary Presbyters ordain him? Could they, or any beſides God, or ſuch as have an extraordinary Commiſſion from him, give a Commiſſion to repreſent him extraordinarily? But that it was no ordinary Presbyterial Ordination, appears from 2 *Tim.* i. 6. St. *Paul* laid on his Hands, which makes it ſo far from a Presbyterial Ordination, that it's the Pattern of an Epiſcopal One, by a Biſhop, with the aſſiſtance of Presbyters. For you will allow St. *Paul* to be above them, both in Order and Power. But *Calvin*, with divers of the Ancients underſtands the Presbytery not to ſignifie a College of Presbyters, but *Donum Presbyteratus*, the Gift, and ſo the Text may be rendred, *Neglect not the Gift of the Presbyterate, which is in thee, and which was given thee by Prophecy, with the laying on of Hands.* What I have ſaid, is ſufficient to ſhew, it was no Presbyterial Ordination; the Gift was conferr'd by the laying on of St. *Paul*'s Hands, (διὰ) and only (μετὰ) with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery.

Having made appear, from the Holy Scriptures, the Order and Powers of Biſhops, as ſuperior to

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all other ordinary Church Officers, I go on to shew that they were to continue in all Ages of the Church; *Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*, Mat. xxviii. 20. It could not be the Apostles personally only to whom our blessed Saviour gave this Promise, for none of them did live much above One Age, but to them and their Successors, the Bishops, who in a regular Succession, were to continue to the End of the World. The Apostles did ordain Bishops in the Churches they planted, *Acts* xiv. 23 and they again were *to commit the* same Office and Trust *to other faithful men, who shall be able to teach others*, 2 Tim. ii. 2. compare this with 1 *Tim.* i. 18. for, as *Grotius*, on *Mat.* xxviii. 20. observes, seeing this Promise extends to the End of the World, and the Apostles were not to live so long, no doubt *Christ* here, under the Person of the Apostles, designs also their Successors in Office.

Let us proceed now and see what the Judgment of the Earliest Fathers was as to our Point. St. *Clement* of *Rome*, (who was co-temporary with St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, Two great Apostles and Pillars of the Church, whom St. *Paul*, in his Epistle to the *Philippians*, calls his *Fellow-labourer, whose Name is in the Book of Life*, who, as *Theodoret* writes, laid St. *Peter's* Head in the Grave, and succeeded both in his See and Martyrdom,) tells us in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, that *The Apostles preaching in Countries and Cities, ordained the First-Fruits of them,*

(*proving them by the Spirit*) *Biſhops and Deacons of ſuch as ſhould believe. Neither was this any new thing: For*, ſays he, *it was ſaid of Biſhops and Deacons, many Ages ago, I will conſtitute their Biſhops in Righteouſneſs, and their Deacons in Faith*, Iſa. lx. 17. He ſays afterwards, "The Apoſtles knew, by our Lord "*Jeſus Chriſt*, that there ſhould Contentions ariſe "upon the account of the Epiſcopate. And there"fore having a perfect Fore-knowledge of this, they "appointed Perſons, as we have before ſaid; and "then gave Direction, when they ſhould die, how "other choſen and approved Men ſhould ſucceed in "their Miniſtry.

So from this Apoſtolical Father we have the Ordination of Biſhops by the Apoſtles aſſerted, and that care was taken by them to ſecure a Succeſſion of Biſhops, according to *2 Tim.* ii. 2.

St. *Polycarp, the Angel of the Church of Smyrna*, ſhall be the next: The Inſcription of his Epiſtle to the *Philippians*, bears that it comes from *him, and the Presbyters with him*; and in the Epiſtle it ſelf, there are ſeveral Things relating to the Behaviour of Presbyters and Deacons, which, tho' to my purpoſe, I have not Time to dwell on them. The Church of *Smyrna*, in their Epiſtle on the Martyrdom of St. *Polycarp*, hath theſe remarkable Words, *He was a truly Apoſtolical and Prophetical Teacher and Biſhop of the Catholick Church at* Smyrna.

Co-temporary with *Polycarp*, the Disciple of St. *John*, and as *Irenæus* says, ordained Bishop of *Smyrna*, by the Apostles, was *Ignatius*, Bishop of *Antioch*, whose Character is given in the account of his Martyrdom, *That he was a man in all things like unto the Apostles.* He speaks plainly throughout his Epistles of Three distinct Orders in the Churches he writes to, to wit, Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons: For Instance, in that to the *Trallians*, he takes notice, "That they "were subject to their Bishop as to Jesus Christ—with- "out your Bishop you should do nothing. Also be "subject to your Presbyters as to the Apostles of "Jesus Christ. And in Sect. 3. In like manner, says "he, Reverence the Deacons as Jesus Christ; and the "Bishops as the Father; and the Presbyters as the "*Sanhedrim* of God; without these there is no Church.

In his Epistle to the *Philadelphians*, "Attend to "the Bishop, to the Presbytery, and to the Deacons. In his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, "It will become you "to run according to the Will of your Bishop, as "also you do—Let us take heed therefore, that we do "not set our selves against our Bishop, that we may "be the Servants of God.

I shall only add one Passage more from this holy Bishop and Martyrs Epistles, and it is out of that to the *Magnesians*. "It is therefore fitting, says he, "that we should not only be called Christians, but "be so: As some call their Governour Bishop, but "yet do all things without him. But I can never

 "think,

"think, that such as these have a good Conscience;
"seeing they are not gather'd together according to
"Gods Commandment: I Recommend these things
to the serious consideration of my Dissenting Bre-
thren, and I pray God, to give them a right under-
standing in all things.

Oh good God! says a famous Writer, speaking of St. *Ignatius*; If thy blessed Martyr *Ignatius* now liv'd, and saw the Insolencies, how would he think, that he himself had fallen among worse Beasts than those that were prepar'd for him.

Irenæus Bishop of *Lyons*, who in his Younger days convers'd with St. *Polycarp*, and Flourish'd about the Year of Our Lord 180 says, iii. *Chap.* of his III. Book, "We can reckon those Bishops, who were
"Constituted by the Apostles in the several Churches,
"and their Successors, all the way to our own Time,
"who neither taught or knew any such Doctrines
"as these *Heretick*s [*Valentinians*] have dream'd; and
"if the Apostles knew any such hidden Mysteries,
"they would certainly deliver'd them chiefly to those
"to whom they Committed the Churches themselves,
Here is a plain Testimony for the Apostolical Institu-
tion of Bishops, and their Succession.

He affirms, *that the Apostles left the Bishops their Successors, giving them their own Power and Authority*, Lib. iii. C. 4. And again, *The true Doctrine is that of the Apostles--according to the Succession of the Bishops, to whom they committed the Churches every where.* And

again

again he tells us, that, *the* Hereticks *were much later than the Bishops, whom the Apostles entrusted with the Churches.* That they *deriv'd their Succession from the Apostles, who with the Succession of the Bishoprick received the true gift* [Charisma] *of the Truth, according to the will of the Father.* Here the Episcopal and Apostolical dignity are one in the Language of *Irenæus.*

Tertullian in his Book, *De Baptismo*, Chap. 17. says, "That the Bishop had the Power of giving "Baptism, and after him the Presbyters and Deacons, "but yet not without the authority of the Bishop, "which is necessary for the Honour and Peace of the "Church. And *De præscript adversus Hæreticos*, Ch. 32. says, He challenges the *Hereticks* of his Time, to shew the beginnings of their Churches, the Succession of their Bishops from the beginning, deriving from the Apostles, or Apostolical Men. For after this manner the Apostolick Churches reckon, as the Church of *Smyrna* says *Polycarp*, was placed in it by St. *John*, and *Clemens* by St. *Peter* in *Rome*. Many more Citations from the Fathers might be brought to Confirm this Truth, as *Justin Martyr, Origen* and St. *Syprian*, but the Time will not allow; that is done to the full, by the Learned Author of a Book Intitled the Principles of the *Cyprianick Age*; and the Advocates for Presbyterial Government, allow Episcopacy to have been in the Church before St. *Cyprian's* Time, who suffered Martyrdom in the Year of our

Lord

Lord 258, besides we have the unanimous consent of the Ecclesiastical Historians, *Eusebius* and others who give account of the first planting of Christianity, and brought down the History of the Church to their own Times; They give us the Names of those that were over the then famous Churches of *Jerusalem*, *Antioch*, *Rome* and *Alexandria*, and the Succession of them all along.

The Dissenters, as well as we believe somethings, there are no greater evidences for, than there is for Episcopacy: To instance in the Canon of the Holy Scripture, that such Books of it were Penn'd by such inspired Writers: That such a Gospel, to wit, St. *Mark's*, or such an Epistle, St. *James's*, or St. *Jude's*, or any other ought to be receiv'd, as Canonical Scripture, there is no greater evidence then is brought for Episcopacy, there is a deal of evidence in the Apostolical Monuments for Episcopacy, but none for the Canonicalness of the named Gospel or Epistles. The Canonical Books were not separated from the Apocryphall, till after the decease of all the Apostles, that is, till the second Century. Nay the Learned tell us, that some Books were not universally receiv'd even in the Third; it was only a few Men that could be Judges, that such and such Books were Written by Persons Divinely Inspired, compared with those that could not but know, what Form of Government was instituted by the Apostles, and continued from their time in the Churches. Every Man may be supposed

pos'd to know the Government of his Country, even before, as well as in his own time, whether it is Monarchical, or that of a Commonwealth, tho' they be Strangers to the Statute Books. But after all, if Men will be contentious and ſhut their Eyes againſt the cleareſt Light, there is no more to be ſaid to them, but what the Apoſtle ſays, to the Contentious and Schiſmatical *Corinthians*, we have no ſuch Cuſtom, nor the Churches of God.

My Third Head is, *That no* Diſſenters *from the Epiſcopal Church, have the power of conferring Orders, and conſequently they cannot authorize any to Preach or Adminiſter the Sacraments.*

The ſerious conſideration of this, made me uneaſy when I was a Diſſenting Teacher, and had good encouragement among them, and the Conviction I at laſt receiv'd of the Truth of this Doctrine, after a diſintereſted enquiry, and reading the beſt Authors I could meet on both ſides, made me leave the Diſſenters, and beg to be received into the Church. I bleſs God for the ſatisfaction and Peace of Mind, that my Reconciliation to the Church has given me; and I doubt not, but if my other Diſſenting Brethren, would bring themſelves to lay aſide Prejudice, Intereſt and Party, and ſearch impartially for Truth, they would follow my Example, and find the Comforts of it.

Having already prov'd *Epiſcopal Ordination* from the Holy Scriptures and earlieſt Antiquity, and that holy Orders continued to be given ever afterwards

by

by the Bishops of the Churches in a regular Succession from the Apostles, and that no Ordination was perform'd without an Apostle or Bishop; I think the consequence is clear, that Dissenters have no valid Orders. A straight Line is a Rule both for straight and crooked Lines, so the Establishing of *Episcopal Ordination* in the manner I have done, quite overthrows the groundless Pretensions of the Dissenters. I challenge them to name any other *Ordination* than *Episcopal*, that was approv'd of in any regularly constituted Church, for the first 1500 Years, or to find any Church within that Time, whose History is clearly given by approv'd Historians, who had sufficient means to know the facts that they relate, was without Bishops to Ordain in it, and to govern it. Is not the Succession of Bishops in the famous Churches of *Jerusalem*, *Antioch*, *Alexandria*, *Ephesus*, *Constantinople* and *Rome*, as well as of many other Churches, clearly deliver'd to us by the *Ecclesiastical Historians*, and other Writers of entire Credit? Is not *Episcopal Ordination* and their Power of Jurisdiction, plainly declared by the Apostolical Canons, and the most celebrated General Councils? Are not all Ordinations without a Bishop against the Canons and Constitutions of Councils universally condemn'd? Nay even *Jerome* himself, who shew'd some peevishness against the Bishops, reserves the Power of Ordination to the Bishop? *Tertullians* Argument against the *Hereticks*, is as conclusive against the Dissenters,

None

None of the Hereticks, says he, *were able to shew, what their Churches were Founded, or their First Bishops ordain'd by any Apostle, or any Apostolick Person, persevering in Communion with the Apostles, yet this was the way the Apostolick Churches*, (pray take notice) *observ'd in their Reckonings*; and he instances in *Smyrna* and *Rome*. Nay, in this Matter, the Dissenters out-run those Hereticks, who were not against Bishops, but only against Orthodox Bishops. *Aerius*, even amongst the ancient Hereticks, stands by himself alone in this Point. How zealous were the Holy Fathers, whose Words I have cited, for a continued Succession of Bishops? How can they who have none, have sufficient Orders, or be reputed Churches? They are *Self-originated*, they take and give Orders themselves, contrary to the Belief and Practice of all the Churches of *Christ* before *Calvin*'s Time. Their Work is not of God, but of Men, against the Institutions of God, and the Practice of the Christian Churches in all Ages and Places, and therefore *it must come to nought*: The Rule of *Vincentius Lirinensis*, *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum est, hoc vere, propriequè catholicum est. That is truly and properly a Catholick Doctrine, which was believ'd, always, every where, and by all.* This is plainly the Case of Episcopacy, and therefore *Presbyterian*, *Independent*, *Anabaptistical*, and other dissenting Ordination and Government, which never was known or receiv'd in any Church for 1500 Years from our Blessed Saviour, must be Anti-catholick and Anti-christian. And thus I think the *Third* Head is sufficiently clear'd, *That* Dissenters *have no Ordination*.

And yet this further appears, by taking notice of the many Divisions and Sub-divisions which are amongst them, and no Agreement as to the Point of ORDINATION. The *Anabaptists* deny the Validity of the Ordination among the *Presbyterians*, and the *Presbyterians* deny the Ordinations both of the *Independents* and *Anabaptists*; so that the Ordinations of one Set of Dissenters is condemn'd by all the rest, and all of them by all Churches of *Christ*. And as there is a Nullity in their Orders, none of them can administer Sacraments

with spiritual Effects, Seal God's Covenant, Bind or Loose, Remit, or Retain Sins, for which Ends our Blessed Saviour has provided his Church with an Authoriz'd Ministry, to continue to the End of the World. I shall conclude this Head with the Words of the Learned Bishop *Taylor*, to whose Writings I have been much obliged for discovering my former Errors. "'Tis evident, says he, and notorious in Scrip-"ture, there is no Ordination but an Apostolical Hand was "in it, one of the ruling Clergy, and as certain in descen-"ding Ages, Bishops always had it in their Power, it was "never deny'd to the Bishop, never imputed to the Presby-"ter. Nay. St. *Jerome*, in his Heat against the Bishops, ex-"cepted Ordination; so these that deny Ordination to the "Bishops, as a good Writter well expresses it, They, like "*Julian* their Fore-runner, destroy and leave the Flock, and "take away the Shepherds, and disperse the Pastors, and tempt "God's Providence to Extraordinaries, and put the People "to hard Shifts, and turn the Channels of Salvation quite "another way, and leave the Church to a perpetual Uncer-"tainty, whether she be alive or dead; and the People desti-"tute of the Life of their Souls, and their Daily Bread, and "their Spiritual Comforts, and Holy Blessings."

All I shall add on this Head, is, That seeing it is evident, the Dissenters have no valid Orders, have no Right to Preach, Administer the Sacraments, and no Power of Discipline, their Censures or Anathema's can never hurt us that have them; especially when we have no worldly Interest in our view, nor Prospect of worldly Circumstances, but do it purely from Conviction and Conscience, and to avoid Sin in partaking any more in their Schism against the Church, and their Opposition to what we believe to be the Institution of *Christ*.

The Fourth Head I promis'd to speak to, is, The Necessity of an Outward-Call to the Ministry, *No man taketh this Office to himself, but he that is called of God.* Such as presume to take this Honour to themselves, are *Self-made-Ministers*, and come under the Curse of those *that run and are not sent*, of whom God complains, *I have not sent them, and yet they run*, Jer. xiii. 14.

How shall they preach, except they be sent? Rom. x. 15. The Church is a visible Society, called, *The Kingdom of God*; *The City of God*; *the Houshold of God*; *The Polity*, which we translate, *the Common-wealth of Israel*; *The Body of Christ*; He is the Head of this Society, and has appointed Governours and Officers of it, and they must have an Outward-Call to their respective Stations in this Kingdom, this Family. *For*, as One says, he, *must goe into a well governed Family, and says I will be Steward here.* It was the Sin of *Jeroboam*, and the ruin of his House, to admit every one that would, to be one of his Priests. *Aaron*, as you have heard, was solemnly called and consecrated by the Command of Almighty-God, to the Priesthood, and after him, *Eleazar* his Son and Successor, and thus it was to continue until the end of the Legal-Priesthood: And tho' the Priesthood was made Hereditary in that Family, yet such and such Qualifications were required, without which they could not be admitted, as you may see at length, *Lev.* xxi. 17, &c. And the Blemishes which were Impediments of their Consecration. Nay, the Heathens did not admit their Priests without a Call, as well as the Qualifications, which they judged necessary. But we have clearly set down, in the Scriptures of the *New Testament*, the Ministerial Outward Call, first of *Christ* to the Office of being our High-Priest, in the Words of our Text, *He glorified not himself*, &c. After his Baptism he was solemnly inaugurated into this Office by a Voice from Heaven, *the heavens were open'd, and the Spirit of God descended like a Dove, and lighted upon him; And lo! a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, Matt. iii. 16, 17. And again, *Mark* ix. 7. *This is my beloved Son, hear him.* Our Lord chose his Apostles, whom he sent, as his Father sent him, and LXX Disciples. And the Apostles, and their immediate Successors, had the Gift of *discerning Spirits*, that is, *of knowing, by Inspiration, who were fit for the Ministry*, 1 Cor. xii. 1 Tim. iii. 23. and accordingly they chose and laid their Hands on them. The Apostles likewise ordain'd Deacons, *Acts* v. But after this Gift ceas'd in the Church, in the after Ages, enquiry was made into the Doctrine, Lives and Morals,

of the Candidates for the holy Miniſtry. The Firſt General Council of *Nice*, *Can.* 2. declares, *That a Time and a Trial is neceſſary to all, before they can be made Clergy-men.* And the Council of *Sardis* decrees, *That Candidates ſhall be examin'd with all Exactneſs and Care--- And undergo Probation in the Inferior, before they be admitted to the Superior Orders--- Since the Apoſtle and Doctor of the* Gentiles *forbids the making haſty Ordinations*, Can. 10. In Conformity to the Apoſtles Rule, and to theſe Councils, and the Practice of the Catholick Church, "The Church of *England* in her Preface to her Of-
"fices of Ordination, after her aſcerting the Three Orders of
"*Biſhops*, *Prieſts*, and *Deacons*, from the Scriptures and An-
"cient Authors, ſays, theſe Three were evermore had in ſuch
"reverend Eſtimation, that no Man might preſume to Exe-
"cute any of them, except he were firſt Call'd, Try'd, Ex-
"amin'd, and known to have ſuch Qualities as are requiſite
"for the ſame; and alſo by Publick Prayer, with Impoſition
"of Hands, were approv'd and admitted thereunto by law-
"full Authority. Thus we have an outward Call to the Sacred
"Offices of the Holy Miniſtry, brought down from the be-
ginning to this Day.

The Evidence I have briefly produc'd for an outward Call to the Miniſtry is ſo full and Convincing, that I hope it will ſatisfy all candid and unprejudiced Perſons, tho' much more might be ſaid on this Subject. Let the Diſſenters then take this Matter ſeriouſly into their Conſideration. Let ſuch of them as aſſume the Office of Preachers and Miniſters conſider what Miſſion they have, and how they will be able to anſwer our Apoſtle's Queſtion, *how can they Preach except they be ſent*? Let them conſider their ſelf aſſumed Authority in ſacred Matters, contrary to the Practice of the Apoſtolical and Primitive Churches, and the whole Catholick Church, for 1500 Years. Let them finally conſider the Example of our Bleſſed Saviour, the Author both of our Religion and Prieſthood, in the words of our Text, *who glorified not himſelf*, &c. Though, not only all the *Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge*, but even *the Fullneſs of the Godhead dwelt in him*, yet he took

not this Office upon him, till called of God to it; How then can the Pretences to any Gifts impower Men to be Miniſters? This is to ſet themſelves up above Chriſt. Horrid Blaſphemy! Our Bleſſed Saviour ſays, *If I honour my ſelf, my honour is nothing: It is my Father that honoureth me*, John viii. 54. Honour may be deſerved by our ſelves, but always comes from others. God is the Fountain, and through and from Chriſt all the Honour of Evangelical Miniſtry is deriv'd, and the Channel through which it paſſes appointed by him, *John* xx. 21. *As my Father ſent me, ſo ſend I you*, &c. *I am with you alway, even unto the end.*

The Diſſenters not only do what they can to Subvert and Deſtroy this *Divine Miſſion*, but ſome alſo oppoſe the Evangelical Doctrines, and leſſen the Privileges of the Infants of Chriſtian Parents, and put them in a worſe Condition than the Children of the *Jews* were in, under the former Diſpenſation, who were admitted into the Covenant, and made Members of the then Church. As being Baptiz'd *in putting on Chriſt*, and an Admiſſion into the Privileges and Benefits of the New Covenant, ſo refuſing them Baptiſm is an Excluſion of them from the moſt valuable Bleſſings. And for their pretended want of Capacity of that Sacrament, does not that Objection lie as ſtrong againſt all the Off-ſpring of *Abraham* in their Infancy? and yet the Child that was not Circumciſed the Eighth Day was to be cut off. Theſe likewiſe ſet up corrupt Nature, and exalt unſatisfy'd Reaſon againſt Revelation. The generality of Diſſenters are Anti-miniſterial and Anti-magiſtratical. Many of their Doctrines are contrary to the Analogy of Faith, and the Moral Law. Many of them contemn Learning, and ſo are led away with the error of the Wicked. They ſeparate from the Church, and do all they can to draw others into their *Schiſm*; whereas the Apoſtle bids us *mark them that cauſe Diviſions and avoid them*: And if all good Chriſtians are bound to avoid them, God can not be with them. They are always for Diviſions, and always divided among themſelves. And as I took notice before, they Preach up Free-grace to the utter Deſtruction of Good Works.

Wherefore,

Wherefore, my dear Friends, Let me beſeech you, for the Church's ſake, the Pillar and ground of Truth, for the Goſpel's ſake; for our Lord's ſake, *who purchas'd the Church with his own Blood*; for your precious Souls, their ſake, which are more Valuable to you and in themſelves, than all the World beſides, *Come out from among them, touch not their unhallow'd things, and God will receive you.* Beſides, the uncontraverted Miſſion of the Biſhops and Miniſters of the Church of *England*, is not ſhe Famous, all the Chriſtian World over, for the Learning of her Divines, for the moſt Elaborate and Edifying Preaching, and for the Piety both of her Clergy, and her orderly People.

Let me ſum up this Diſcourſe in the Words of one of the Learned Doctor's of this renowned Church, which are as follow, "Whoſoever then with unſanctify'd "Hands, that is, with unconſecrated Hands, ſhall dare to "Officiate in the Miniſterial Office, Separated by God, by "Gifts, by Graces, by Publick Order, by an Eſtabliſh'd "Rite, by the Inſtitution of *Jeſus Chriſt*, by the Deſcent of "the *Holy Ghoſt*, by the Practice of the Apoſtles, by the Pra-"ctice of 17 Ages of the Catholick Church, by the neceſſity "of the Thing, by Reaſon, by Analogy to the Diſcourſes of "all the Wiſe and good Men in the World; that Man, like "his Predeceſſor *Corah*, brings an unhallowed Cenſer, which "ſhall never ſend up a right Cloud of Incenſe to God; But yet "that unhallowed Smoak ſhall kindle a Fire, even the Wrath of God, which at laſt ſhall deſtroy the Sacrifice; his Work "ſhall be Conſumed. And when upon his Repentance, him-"ſelf ſhall eſcape, yet it ſhall be ſo as by Fire, that is, with "Danger, and Loſs, and Shame, and Trouble; for our God is "a conſuming Fire.

I ſhall Conclude all with a Petition out of the Liturgy. *More eſpecially we pray for the good Eſtate of the Catholick Church; that it may be ſo guided and govern'd by the good Spirit of God, that all who profeſs and call themſelves Chriſtians, may be led into the Way of Truth, and hold the Faith in unity of Spirit, in the Bond Peace, and in Righteouſneſs of Life.*

FINIS.

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